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ABSTRACT

While the work of teachers and administrators should ideally provide exceptional opportunities for personal fulfillment, these professionals increasingly face diminishing income, negative public opinion, and a growing number of underprepared and undisciplined students. Though a need exists to weed out the small number of destructively self-serving administrators and teachers, steps must be taken to assure the professional survival of those in this demoralizing work environment who take their work seriously. To a great extent this survival depends upon a sound administration to effectively bring together the diverse interests of today's college community. In-service education programs are also important to compensate for diminishing sabbatical leave and course-auditing opportunities, which have traditionally been the bulwark of professional self-respect and aspiration. In providing such programs, colleges should secure voluntary input from faculty in planning areas to be addressed: allow adequate release time: center programs around the study of relevant primary materials: encourage the design of educational experiments as in-service projects: and encourage participants to exhibit the results of their in-service work to the public. Such programs have been initiated at a number of colleges and provide a feasible means of enhancing professional well-being. (JP)

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THE SURVIVAL OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES ASSOCIATION
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
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THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES ASSOCIATION
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THE SURVIVAL OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

It is an absolute outrage, an affront to reason, that it should ever be necessary to prepare an essay with the title of this one.

Teaching is supposed to be a way of life, a kind of work, in which people flourish -- because they are able to work regularly as practitioners of disciplines they love, because they enjoy the companionship of students who are willing and eager to learn, and because their professional colleagues are the kinds of people in whose company one becomes better. Teachers are expected to flourish because they are honored by the trust placed in them. Administrators are supposed to flourish because they are themselves scholars, teachers, and managers who understand the ends of education, the needs of teachers and students, and are dedicated to the organization of institutions which can fulfill these ends. Finally, teachers are supposed to flourish because they want to teach. We do not normally fear the person who aspires to teach, who loves it, in the way we fear the person who loves power, even though there is power in teaching.

What have we made of ourselves and of education? What have we become that we should now have in our midst a growing body of literature about "Faculty Survival," "Faculty Renewal," and "Teacher Burn Out?" What has become of teaching as a way of life if these are real issues? And to what extent are they real issues?

They are very real, profoundly real. And we must take steps to meet them head-on. But we should acknowledge, to begin, that they are not the only issues. The first thing to recognize is that some teachers and administrators ought not to survive, ought not to be in the profession of education; and it is not the business of education to see to their survival. It is the business of education to weed them out.

All of us know such teachers and administrators. There are the lazy ones who do not take the work seriously and whose syllabi are shallow, with student assignments insignificant and thoughtlessly graded. There are those who do not love the disciplines and who are no example of learnedness. There are those who have no real respect for students, and who blieve that teaching is inconsequential unless it takes place in a prestige institution under the most favorable conditions. There are the ones who stand for nothing, who have no commitment to a vision of what students deserve to learn and must learn, the ones who will follow any trend in education just because it is fashionable. These are the ambulance-chasers of education, the ones for whom there is truly no hope because there is nothing that abides with them. There are the administrators who indulge in the idle but pernicious fancy that moving from teaching to administration is a promotion to more important work because it is better paying work, The administrators who are self-aggrandizing, who could never teach a decent class because they do not work in the disciplines, and who therefore cannot deserve to be credible in the profession. There are those who take cheating lightly and those who take learning in the academic disciplines themselves lightly, ostensibly on the grounds that such learning is impractical, but more often because they personally lack the intellectual depth to exemplify those disciplines in action, to appreciate the practical power of well-conceived ideas. There are the illegal recruiters, the inept spokesmen and women, and there are the ones who do not understand what it means to be qualified to accept the responsibilities of formal education and who whill never do the work or acquire the habits necessary to be qualified. There are the chronic complainers who set a terrible example for students because they have never been in really terrible circumstances and do not know what merits complaint. And there are those who will forsake intellectual and skill-related aims to political ones, those who will allow anything in the curriculum to be sacrificed to the political goals of pressure

groups. For these survival is not to be celebrated. It is to be prevented.

But these are not such a large portion of our profession, and we rightly emphasize the others, the teachers and administrators who can and do take the duties of their stations seriously and who are engaged in the business of trying to become better at their work. What of these, the overwhelming majority of teachers and certainly a significant portion of administrators? What of them, and why is their survival an issue?

Look what they face in many settings all over the country in both pre-college and higher education. All too often, they face numbers of unprepared, undisciplined, sometimes dishonest students with limited educational background at their mothers' knees and in their fathers' laps and with all the consequences that follow in school at every level. They face deteriorating income, reduced opportunity for sabbatical study, a remarkable arrogant and uninstructive continuing media blitz about how terrible education is, departmental or divisional isolation, internecine fighting over the curriculum without benefit of qualified administrative leadership.

They face dispiriting circumstances in which students are <u>not</u> eager to earn, or do not know how to do so in a formal way and must be reached by great imagination and understanding in teachers, where there is not enough time for their own individual or group study, in which they institutions have no considered sense of mission or purpose, and in which expenditure budgets turn on course marketability rather than on any informing educational ideal. They face too much which allows them a warranted sense that they are going it alone at the very time when the country is trying to make educational opportunity into genuine opportunity for all, no matter how much or how little students are prepared to give of themselves.

Well, if educational opportunity is to be genuine, then we had better make it possible for the best among us to survive. There are ways to do this, ways

for institutions to approximate conditions under which serious teachers and administrators not only survive, but flourish as they are supposed to.

I am eager to talk about these ways, because my experience testifies to the magnificent quality of very large numbers of the members of our profession. We need for them to survive and to be of continuing benefit to generations of students, young and old, who are yet to find their way to college.

Some of the means open to us are simple and easy to implement. They are not expensive. Others are complex, subtle, and vary in financial cost. All deserve attention.

Most of the means depend on basic elements of sound administration: candor and supportiveness; insistence on investing all that can be afforded in financial opportunity for students and faculty personnel; presentation of the college to the public in a way that shows it merits respect; resolve that much will be offered to students and that much will be demanded of them; and that programs will be created to make clear to teachers the background and experience of their students so that appropriate vehicles for teaching them may be developed; clarity in public and private about the aims of the institution and preparedness to make financial sacrifices to safeguard these aims; for private colleges, sound investment management, and for all, elimination of administrative or other budgetary fat; attentiveness to faculty and student observations about strengths and weaknesses and determination to exercise one's best judgment in light of this attentiveness; more than pro-forma interest in what goes on in classrooms; and efforts to do all we can to make the college as much as possible a community.

The last is perhaps more difficult today than ever before. I believe that the survival of education into the future turns on the extent to which we succeed at it.

There was a time, of course, when institutions of higher education were uncomplicated communities, uncomplicated because the members of such institutions

shared a relatively common background, common ideals, and common aspirations. The hierarchical structure of the community was largely unquestioned, the support of church and family given. The demands on the members of the community were explicit, and the population limited to those for whom such a community was acceptable. Such communities faced no issues of unionization, few questions about goals and eligibility for admission, modest budgetazry problems, and they could rely on alumni support for the preservation of tradition. The sabbatical for personal renewal was commonplace, and student:faculty ratios were quite small. Discipline was largely unquestioned, the authority of the institution to act unilaterally largely assured.

These were not the best of all possible communities, and they had real weaknesses -- opportunities were available only to the few, not to the many; and no one will ever know how much talent never had a chance to develop because of these limitations. Students were seldom exposed to real diversity in their peers.

Now, for most institutions, most colleges and universities, circumstances are quite different. Student bodies are diverse; eligibility for admission is broad rather than narrow; faculty members and administrators are diverse; the aims of the students strikingly different; lines and limits of authority vary; internal administrative-faculty-student affairs can be adversarial and are sometimes litigious; the sabbatical is often budgetarily impossible; the curriculum can and often does range over vast domains of human experience -- civic, technical, occupational, professional, academic, personal, social. Relations with communities are as variable as the town-gown tension of some colleges, to the immensely successful sharing back and forth of resources of knowledge and experience which characterizes some colleges and their surrounding communities and even regions. Some people take these changes in education to be grounds for hand-wringing despair. I take them to be the conditions of the challenges which face us if we are to live up to our commitment to genuine educational opportunity throughout America.

I suspect that nothing is harder on both good and promising teachers than the deteriating opportunities for sabbatical. No teacher who really respects himself or herself can tolerate not becoming a more knowledgable and accomplished teacher with a more powerful grasp of subject matter as time goes on. As teacher loads increase, and contact hours in classes and in offices grow, as teachers must become more able to deal with student problems in skills of learning in addition to teaching their subjects, the chance to devote time to scholarship is reduced. This is a real hardship for teachers who love their subjects as well as their students. Sabbaticals are going out of much of education because of their cost; equally bad, because of teaching loads, it is also progressively more difficult for teachers to audit courses taught by their colleagues.

Auditing may be as important as sabbatical. It provides faculty a chance to learn subject matter from senior colleagues in their own fields of study; it enables them to learn from teachers in other fields, academic and technical; and it gives them a chance to observe first-rate teachers in action. I have never seen or heard of a course in pedagogy which could even begin to teach as much about teaching as this experience can. And the entire literature of teaching contains, to my knowledge, only a handful of books which can promise to be truly instructive, from Plato's Meno, Ulich's 3,000 Years of Education Wisdom, G. S. Lewis' Abolition of Man, and Gilbert Highet's Art of Teaching, to Mina Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations. Of course, there are others, but surprisingly few, I think, given all that has been written, much of which is redundant or trivial.

These two experiences - sabbatical and auditing - are traditional bulwarks of teacher survival, the first because it encourages self-respect by enabling the teacher to become perceptibly more accomplished and shows that the college believes in the importance of this part of the teacher's life; the second because it provides opportunity for learning through the college itself, exhibits a shared sense of purpose, and enables teachers to incorporate effective varieties of teaching with their own daily work. They are opportunities which promise the vitality of the future

for the teacher or administrator; they help to sustain aspiration because they encourage hope. Their loss or reduction is compounded by the fact that most administrators have eleven month contracts, and many teachers teach in the summer, if there are opportunities, and take other jobs for income if there are not. Aspiration, hope, reflection and inspiration -- all crucial to well-being -- tend to diminish under such circumstances, and the dimmer they become, the worse are the professional vital signs of faculty, administrators, students, and institutions themselves. All the more so because personal respect and shared purpose are binding features of communities.

I do not have great hope for the preservation of these features of faculty-administrative professional life. They are expensive, few private foundations or public agencies are sufficiently knowledgeable to support them in ways that bear directly on teaching -- only the very best foundations do, and they appear to many administrators to be insufficiently responsive to large-scale instructional problems. I believe these administrators are wrong, but given the budgets we all face, I think it unlikely that I will be able to persuade them. We have preserved them at my college, but it takes tremendous and continuing effort to pay for them.

If I am right about this demise, and about the consequences of it, then some less costly alternative must be advanced which tends toward the same ends. In my experience, the alternatives in faculty and administrative renewal are largely bound up with truly sound programs of in-service education. Not the "gimmicky, one-day, everybody come and listen to some putative expert who knows nothing about individual classes, local students, and the like" tell how the curriculum should be revised or describe some cure-all innovative teaching method which is supposed to solve all problems overnight, but patient, cooperative work by faculty and administration intended to deal with problems of teaching and learning which are of local importance.

In my experience, in-service education programs are most effective when they are designed and conducted by teachers and administrators working together over an extended period of time. Initially, teachers, and at best, college-level administrators must sit down together to discuss specific needs within the college and ask themselves what their college does well and what it does not do well. They should identify an area of weakness or need that they agree is worth the time and energy to correct and that is within their power to treat, given their other daily responsibilities.

Also, in-service prorgrams yield the best results when the participation of teachers and administrators is voluntary. The staff involved will have the benefit of a common purpose and a shared commitment to the work they are setting out to do. These benefits tend to give the project more durability than can be achieved by single in-service days involving all the faculty, because they ensure that the project has a specific, planned objective and focus. It is, of course, imperative that the team of teachers and administrators keep others on the staff aware of what they are doing and invite others to participate or contribute ideas to the project.

Colleges should do their best to provide some release time for teachers and administrators participating in the in-service work, even if budgetary constraints permit only modest amounts of release time. If the project is to be truly thoughtful, the participants must be attentive, and they must spend time on the work.

Whatever the goals of the project, the work of the participants should include the study of primary materials in the academic disciplines that are relevant to the project. If the project has to do with improved teaching, for example, participants should begin by studying works by and about great teachers. In addition to books I have mentioned above, they could read Robert Browning's poem "Development", which describes and celebrates the way Browning's father taught him; Cicero's letters to his son, which exhibit the eloquence possible in written communication with a pupil; Montaigne's "The Education of Children," which is among the most thoughtful reflections

ever written on the education of the young. Rober Ulich's Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom contains selections of great documents in education and teaching from Plutarch to Erasmus, from Galileo to Pestalozzi.

As another example, if the project has to do with improving communication skills among students, the in-service participants ought to study cases of excellence in communication, possibly Aristotle's Rhetoric or Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria; the speeches of Churchill, Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, the poems of James Dickey or Eugene Field, a great novel; and even films, possibly of dialogue.

The point is that shared and cooperative study of primary materials draws those in the project closer together in the intellectual enterprise of learning more about their subjects and achieving a common back ground for discussion. And, because discussion of such works helps teachers and administrators to learn what their colleagues know and love best, it further enables them to bring more ideas and resources into their own teaching. Also, teachers and administrators planning a new program make an intellectual investment in the project and are not sidetracked by discussions that focus only on methodology. Those who participate in such an in-service venture are reminded that they are practitioners of the disiplines of knowing and learning, not just transmitters of method and content to others. But more importantly, the work is fun, especially for those who love what they teach. It is renewing.

Design, trial, and testing of pilot units or experiments in teaching should be encouraged as an initial goal of in-service projects. This enables the participants to refine their materials and methods and leads to implementation of courses of programs that have an excellent chance of successfully serving the intended purposes. In this way a college maintains a manageable pace of change, and the effects of the in-service work emerge positively without creating divisive threats, real or imagined, to established interests and programs.

The participants in the project also should recognise that working as a team does not necessarily mean team teaching. The existence of the team as the backdrop for

teaching is more important than the team-teaching practices generally associated with such projects.

Finally, the teachers, administrators, and the students involved with in-service projects should be encouraged to exhibit to the college community and the general public the results of their work through symposia and other open forums.

There are many instructive programs of this kind available for review: they range from in-service programs where texts are studied in common by teachers and administrators with an eye to creating orientation films and programs to teach students what the resources of a college are -- what is there and how to get at it -- to programs intended to overcome distance and even conflict between academic and technical faculty by building course units for students which play off their work in other courses, whether in history and business management, or law and health care delivery, or ethics and law enforcement. The programs are project oriented, they have a finte duration, but their consequences - in promoting friendship among colleagues, in developing durable course units and courses, and in enriching the teaching skills of the participants -- are long-lasting. They bring people together for real work and they carry over into social life.

The idea, of course, is not to copy the programs, but to follow their lead in light of local circumstances. And because they are project oriented, they are easier to support with external funding. Naturally, one must be wary of selecting projects just because there is money to be found for them. Some projects do nothing but fragment the curriculum because they chase the money while ignoring real local needs. These are worse than useless.

The programs can be supplemented by modest use of visitors who are prepared to stay for a couple of days, visit classes, consult with faculty and administrators, sometimes students, and to suggest ways in which their experience might apply to the project. One might look, for example, at the work done in all these areas by Genesee

Community College in Batavia, New York, or the Borough of Manhattan Community College in the city. Both have used methods I have described in cooperation with the National Humanities Faculty with true effectiveness.

I will gladly discuss details as we talk after Professor Spear's observations. And I apologize to him for being unable to deliver my paper to him before today. He has been very generous in agreeing to criticize it having received it so recently.

Let me conclude by saying that my most important point is that Faculty-Administrative survival, and therefore the well-being of students, turns on the achievement of a measure of community which gives sustenance in an educational system encouraged to be many things to many people. And what I have tried to address is some of the feasible means toward that achievement.

Thank you.

Edwin J. Delattre
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